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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0579
RUEHLM/USDAO COLOMBO CE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MALDIVES FLOODING: TEXT OF PRESIDENT GAYOOM'S
LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH REQUESTING ASSISTANCE

1. Summary: The Maldives Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a diplomatic note to Embassy Colombo May 21 conveying a May 18 letter from Maldives President Gayoom to President Bush stating that widespread flooding caused by heavy sea swells had damaged a third of Maldives' 194 inhabited islands and requesting "immediate support and assistance." Embassy Colombo is coordinating with Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance regional advisor, who is currently in Sri Lanka, to assess the damage in Maldives and make a recommendation about possible USG assistance. USAID Colombo, which has a small tsunami reconstruction grant underway in Maldives, has asked its Male'-based contractor to check with International Committee of the Red Cross representatives around Maldives for their assessment of the flood damage and needs. The full text of President Gayoom's letter follows. End summary.

2. Begin text:

President
Republic of Maldives
Male
18 May 2007

His Excellency Mr. George W. Bush,
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C.
United States of America

Excellency,

I write to bring to your urgent attention an environmental emergency that has inflicted damage to homes, livelihoods and infrastructure in many parts of the country. My people are once more facing difficulties and heartache.

Over the past three days, more than one-third of our 194 inhabited islands have been experiencing widespread flooding as a result of unprecedented sea swells. Apart from the devastating 2004 Tsunami, never in our recorded history have so many islands faced flooding simultaneously. While, with the Grace of the Almighty Allah, there have been no casualties as a result of the flooding, extensive damage has been caused to homes, jetties and fishing vessels. The flooding of islands by sea water has also destroyed trees, plants and crops on many islands. The large number of islands where urgent assistance is needed has stretched our

capacities for provision of immediate relief and recovery.

As you know, the severe impacts of the December 2004 tsunami disaster had caused tremendous damage to the country and its economy. It set us back by many years, in our development efforts. While we have been restoring the lives and livelihoods of our people, rebuilding our damaged homes and infrastructure across the country over the past two and a half years, this latest environmental emergency will certainly create further grave challenges in what is already a gigantic task.

In the light of the above, I appeal to you and your government for your immediate support and assistance in helping the victims by providing relief and recovery at the earliest possible time.

This latest calamity also highlights the environmental vulnerability of our archipelago and the urgent need for greater long-term international assistance in mitigation against natural disasters and environmental emergencies. It is quite clear that apart from national efforts, concerted international action is required to protect our fragile environment.

We look forward to the continued assistance and support from our development partners and friends in our hour of need.

Yours sincerely,
Maumoon Abdul Gayoom

End text.
BLAKE